England - Postmasters, Carriers, & others 75

TO THE HONOVRABLE THE HOVSE OF COMMONS NOVV ASSEMBLED IN PARLIAMENT.

The Humble Remonſtrance of the Grievances of all his Majeſties Poſts of *England*, Together with Carryers, Waggoners, and others, miſerably ſuſtained by the unlawfull Projects of *Thomas Witherings*, ſometimes Mercer of *London*.

FIRST, THAT the ſaid Mr. *Witherings*, by Proclamation of July, 1635. did unjuſtly thruſt Thirteene Poſt-Maſters, and their two Factors out of their imployments; for the weekely conveyance of all mens Letters, betweene *London* and *Plymouth*: which they themſelves, (long before the ſaid Proclamation) at their great labours and expences, had ſet up: To the great contentment of all his Majeſties Subjects; And thereby the ſaid *Witherings* did ingroſſe to himſelfe forty pound *per annum*, out of each of their labours, amounting to 600. pound *per annum*, and ſo continued till his Majeſties Sequeſtration, in July 1640. being five yeares, or thereabouts, which comes to 3000. pound.

Secondly, That the ſaid Mr. *Witherings*, from July aforeſaid 1635. did pay unto the Poſt-Maſters of *Yorke*, *Cheſter*, and other Roades, for ſome ſhort time, ſixe pence *per* mile, and afterwards fell to three pence *per* mile, for the weekely carrying, and re-carrying, of all mens Letters upon thoſe Roades, untill he had gotten his Monopoly Patent of 1637. Then by vertue of the ſaid Patent, he compelled the ſaid Poſt-Maſters, forcing them to runne two thouſand miles every weeke, to carry all mens Letters for nothing, Thereby violently taking out of their labours likewiſe, the ſumme of 678. pound *per annum*, and upwards, which he alſo ſo continued, till his Majeſties Sequeſtration aforeſaid, which comes to 2035. pound, 4. ſhillings, and 8. pence. So the whole ſumme, which the ſaid *Witherings* hath extorted out of the Labours, and Callings, of a thouſand perſons, the Poſt-Maſters, and their Families, amounts to 5038. pound, 4. ſhillings, and 8. pence. Beſides 4000. pound he made and received for Poſt-places, within the compaſſe of three yeares, or thereabouts.

Thirdly, That whereas the Poſt-Maſters had formerly 4000. pound *per annum* Fee, onely for carrying his Majeſties Pacquets, which ſumme being divided amongſt them, comes not to above 20. pence, 2. ſhillings, or 3. ſhillings, to each mans ſhare, *per diem*, or thereabouts, And for which ſervice the Poſt-Maſters, were enjoyned to keepe two or three ſervants, and horſes, purpoſely to attend that ſervice; yet *Witherings* under pretence of doing his Majeſty ſome extraordinary ſervice, reduced the ſaid 4000. pound *per annum*, to 2053. pound *per annum*. And yet paid them the ſame out of the fruites of their owne Labours, And gave alſo out of the benefit which he gained out of their ſaid Labours, 1500. pound *per annum*, to the then Secretaries of State, for the ſupporting, and ſecuring the ſaid Monopoly Patent, thereby altogether Monopolizing other mens labours to his owne particular profit, contrary to the Lawes, and Conſtitutions of this Kingdome, and of free Subjects, whereas the Lord *Stanhope*, had nothing out of their labours. Onely he had 100. Markes *per annum*, and that payable out of his Majeſties Exchequer.

Fourthly, That the ſaid *Witherings*, by vertue likewiſe of his Monopoly Patent, impriſoned Carryers, and Waggoners (a long time together, and would not releaſe them without giving great Bond, to bring all Letters to his Office) for carrying the Letters of his Majeſties Subjects, cauſing their Bagges and Fardels to be ript open, violently taking their Goods and Letters from them, to their great prejudice and loſſe, and to the great hinderance of all commerce betweene his Majeſties loving Subjects.

Fifthly, That as ſoone as his Majeſty did fully underſtand, what great oppreſſions and wrongs *Witherings* had committed, in the execution of the ſaid Patent, againſt the Poſt-Maſters, and others his Majeſties Subjects; his Majeſty was gratiouſly pleaſed to Sequeſter the ſame into the hands of *Phillip Burlemache*, ordering him to pay 1500. pound *per annum*, to the ſaid Poſt-Maſters, formerly given to the then Secretaries of State, being the fruites of their owne labours, which ſaid addition of 1500. pound *per annum*, is now paid by Mr. *Burlemache* unto the Poſt-Maſters, according to his Majeſties gratious appointment: his Majeſty referring the full ſettlement thereof unto this Honorable Houſe.

Sixthly, That the ſaid *Witherings*, by his projecting, and inſinuating wayes, to the aforeſaid Secretaries of State, hath not onely barred, and cut off the Poſt-Maſters from making ſuite to his Majeſty, for their juſt arreares of 30982. pound, or thereabouts, to the utter undoing of a great number of his Majeſties poore Servants. (Some part of which arreares, being the whole Eſtates, and Portions of divers poore Widdowes, and Father-leſſe Children.) But alſo very cunningly contracted with divers of them to take a third part for the whole, or elſe they were to receive nothing at all, and ſome of them being greatly neceſſitated, were conſtrained ſo to doe. But ſome others, although they ſo contracted, yet they could receive none of that Compoſition.

Seventhly, That by reaſon of the multitude of Poſt-warrants granted to any perſon for a ſmall gratuity, and likewiſe divers Pacquets, commanded to be carryed for perſons not nominated, or allowed by his Majeſties Orders, (which Pacquets might as well goe againſt, as for the State) the Poſt-Maſters (being ſo over-charged, having not ſufficient wages to keepe a competent number of horſes to diſcharge their places) have beene enforced to preſſe and charge the Country with horſes, and thereby ſubject to their arreſts, cryes, and complaints.

Eighthly, That when the Sequeſtration of the Letter-Office for forraigne parts, was in examination before Mr. *Glyn*, then the Poſt-Maſters, Carryers, Waggoners, and others, petitioned this Honourable Houſe, againſt Mr. *Witherings* Monopoly Patent, for the In-land Letter-Office, But becauſe Mr. *Witherings* Counſell, confeſſed that the ſame Patent to be a Monopoly, and that they could ſay nothing for it, nor would meddle in it, therefore the ſaid Patent at that time was no further queſtioned.

All which Premiſſes conſidered, they moſt humbly beſeech this Honourable Houſe to Commiſerate their great preſſures, and that according to Juſtice they may be relieved.

And as in duty bound, they ſhall dayly pray, and praiſe God for the happy proceedings of *Parliaments*.